

Benjamin Riggs House and Other Riggs Houses  
Robinhood, Maine

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of Maine

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Josiah T. Tubby, District Officer  
537 Congress Street, Portland, Maine

"RIGGS HOUSES"

Robinhood(Riggsville), Sagadahoc County, Maine

Owner

Mrs. Rebecca H. Reyher(Benjamin Riggs House)

Date of Erection~~1790-1795~~ circa 1792-94Builder

Benjamin Riggs

Present Condition

Square house with central chimney, hip roof, central front entrance. The house has had little alteration. Fireplaces have been repaired, but most of the floors, walls, and ceilings are unchanged. Original front door. Blinds have been added to the exterior. A two story extension with gable roof, and a barn have been added at the rear of the original structure.

Number of Stories

Two

Materials of Construction

Foundation of stone with red brick above grade. Floors of pine. Exterior walls clapboarded with hand made lapped clapboards. Interior walls plastered and panelled. Shingled roof.

The house is built on a ledge, the central chimney being on the highest part of the ledge.

Additional Data

The History of Bath and Environs, by Parker McCobb Reed states that Benjamin Riggs was born in Gloucester, Mass. in 1759. He came to Robinhood at the age of seventeen, as a cabin boy, and settled there. His first abode was a log cabin which was located near the site of the present house. He conducted coast wise freighting and carried cargoes from Maine to Massachusetts coast towns, also traded with the West Indies. Benjamin Riggs was a member of General Court of Massachusetts and later representative for the State of Maine legislature when it met in Portland. He was the first by the Riggs name to settle in Robinhood. It is supposed that the common name of the village "Riggsville" is due to the fact that for many years it was almost entirely populated by the Riggs family.

The chief industries of the village were fishing on the Grand Banks and ship building in the coves of the Sassanoo River, on which the village is located.

The wharf, on the river at the foot of the hill below the Benjamin Riggs House was built by Benjamin Riggs, as were also several one story buildings used as store houses. There were originally five of these small buildings all numbered. Number one was the original store building and was built about 1800. In 1820, Benjamin Riggs and his son Moses built the two story store building at the wharf, where they conducted a general store.

James Riggs, another son of Benjamin Riggs, built a small store on a point of land farther up the river and conducted his business there. He also built a farm house which is still standing on this plot.

Directly below the Benjamin Riggs House stands a house built by Moses Riggs about 1815. The house was built from an old blacksmith shop which had been located at the head of the wharf. This building was moved up from the wharf and the early Moses Riggs House built from it. When Moses Riggs' son was married, he took up his abode in his father's house and Moses Riggs, in 1853, built himself another house which is located nearer to the wharf and close by the general store. Note that there are three generations of houses from the crest of the hill to the river's edge, 1780, 1815, and 1853.

The oldest Riggs house, that of Benjamin Riggs occupies the most slightly location of all the buildings in the small village, located as it is, on the crest of the hill overlooking the river. It is also the most interesting structure architecturally.

The above information has been gathered through personal contact with decedante of Benjamin Riggs. Some details were also taken from the History of Bath and Environs by Parker McCobb Reed.

*Eleanor C. Jannell*

Approved:

*Frederic T. Jannell*

March 3, 1937

*W.C. 6/14/57*